

# 2021 Provincial Public Library Grant Report (PLGR)

## Castlegar & District Public Library

### 1. Introduction: Library and Community Profile

*Provide a brief description of the community and library, focusing on what has changed in the past year (up to 500 words).*

The Castlegar and District Public Library is located in the city of Castlegar in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia. From its humble beginnings in the 1940s in the basement of the United Church, to the current building that expanded in 2000, the Library is supported and appreciated by the community it serves.

Our Library often receives compliments for being an open, welcoming place where friendly staff are ready to assist patrons with their requests and where citizens and visitors can meet to socialize and learn.

We boast busy meeting rooms that host a number of community organizations as well as our own programs. We are happy to offer extensive outreach in the community, and continuously work towards being a “special place in the community to explore, create, share ideas, information and have fun.”

The Library serves a wide geographic area including the City of Castlegar, Areas I, and J of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK), with a service area population of nearly 14,000. Through a service agreement with the Nelson Library, we also serve residents of Area H South of the RDCK.

The major employers in the area include Selkirk College, Zellstoff Celgar, and School District 20. The major regional employer, Teck Resources, is located 30 kilometers from Castlegar.

Looking back at 2021 the phrase that comes to mind is “*Stay the Course.*” Our library offered online and outdoor programming and strived to achieve our strategic goals under pandemic restrictions. I am pleased to see our statistics rebounding over last year. In 2021, we circulated 92,223 items, which is an increase of 22,000 over last year and 71,526 people came to the library, which is 18,000 more than 2020. I am always proud of our resource sharing numbers. For a comparatively small library, our numbers show the strength of our collection and our dedication of staff to fulfil patron needs province wide.

### 2. Major Projects/Programs

*Please describe any new or major ongoing projects/programs the library has delivered in the past year. To report on multiple projects/programs, “copy” the blank table below and insert additional tables as needed using the “paste” function. Use one table per project/program.*

**I realize it says to use individual project/program but I have grouped items below based on similar themes and strategic markers.**

#### Project/Program Name

New technology purchases to enhance our library collection and user experience.

- Playaway Launchpads.

- MeeScan self checkout system.

[Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.](#)

With a One-Time Technology Grant from the BC Government, we purchased 18 lendable tablets for our library collection. These pre-loaded tablets come full of skill-building fun and learning opportunities covering math, STEAM and reading. Tablets come ready to use and do not require an internet connection. We also added a new self-checkout station at our service counter giving patrons convenience and privacy.

[How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?](#)

**Focus Area:** *Innovation and Programming*

**Goal:** We provide enhanced library experiences for our region.

**Strategy:** We offer hands-on experience in accessing new technologies.

[How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.](#)

**Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services).

[What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.](#)

[Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role \(e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery\)?](#)

## **Launchpads**

The Launchpads are a big hit with families who come to our library. Patrons like that they can take them home, they are easy to navigate and they do not require an internet connection. The tablets have circulated over 70 times so far with many families making their way through the whole collection. If the popularity of the tablets continues to grow, I will add more titles. From the library perspective, Launchpads are easy to administer and do not require a lot of staff time.

## **MeeScan**

Our library had been without a self-checkout system for 2 years. Our previous self-checkout ran on an old computer with a hand held scanner that was not user friendly. I wanted to find a system that was affordable, included a built in scanner and would work with our ILS Sitka. MeeScan has been the perfect solution for our patrons. The kiosk gives people a private checkout option and offers them the convenience of self-service when there is a lineup. People have commented that it is the easiest system they have used and so far, it has been trouble free for staff.

## **Partnerships**

We purchased the Launchpads and the MeeScan system with a One-Time Technology Grant from the BC Government.

### Project/Program Name

Castlegar Overdrive Advantage Collection

**Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.**

**How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?**

**Focus Area:** Organizational Vitality

**Goal:** We have the people, resources and expertise to sustain our success.

**Strategy:** We actively implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action that speak directly to libraries.

**Focus Area:** Physical Space and Collections

**Goal:** Our revitalized space and high-quality collections meet the diverse needs of our users.

**Strategy:** We support sustainability by encouraging users to 'borrow more and own less'.

**How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.**

**1. Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)

**3. Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)

***What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.***

***Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?***

In 2021, our Overdrive checkouts increased by 6,091 over our 2019 (pre-pandemic) numbers. Starting late 2020, we have been building an Overdrive Advantage collection, which reduces wait times on popular holds for our patrons. Our library also purchased 21 titles by BIPOC authors that speak about racism and the lasting negative effects of the residential school system in Canada. The Castlegar Library currently owns 88 titles that have circulated 1,277 times.

Our library will continue to build our Advantage collection in 2022 with a Community Development Grant from Electoral Area I. Items purchased with this grant will focus on Truth and Reconciliation.

### Partnerships

One-Time Technology Grant from the BC Government and collection development funds from the Kootenay Library Federation.

### Project/Program Name

Pandemic Style Programing - hybrid story-time, take-away art kits and online regional book clubs.

### **Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.**

#### **Hybrid story-time, take-away craft kits**

2021 was another challenging year for in-person events so we continued with online and outdoor programming. For the first half of 2021, our children's librarians continued to record stories and posted them online via social media. In the fall, we moved programming off the screen in favour of outdoors for the remainder of the year. Our staff dedicated themselves to preparing 3,335 takeaway craft kits for families last year, an epic task.

Our Summer Reading Club Coordinators held a hybrid (online/outdoor) program combined with weekly grab & go activity bags. The students arranged five special outdoor guests throughout the summer from Circle of Indigenous Nations Society, Selkirk College, Wild Safe BC, Doukhobor Discover Centre and a local children's entertainer. The summer wrapped up with our Mayor handing out reading medals to the kids. Seventeen local businesses contributed prizes to the club, which added to the overall joy of the kids involved.

#### **Online Regional Book Clubs**

The Kootenay Library Federation (KLF) partners continued to promote the Read Local adult book club and the Kootenay Teen book club. These online clubs are an interesting hybrid that combines a book club with an author reading. We were also excited to host popular mystery writer Iona Wishaw in partnership with the Creston and Rossland Public Library. In the fall Slokan Valley author Rita Moir held our first in-person author talk discussing her recent memoir *Not of Reason*.

### **How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?**

**Focus Area:** Innovation and Programming

**Goal:** We provide enhanced library experiences for our region.

**Strategy:** We have enhanced programming that fosters creativity, fun, and learning.

### **How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.**

The current provincial strategic plan does not mention literacy programming specifically, but early literacy programs and book clubs help build engaged citizens and lifelong learners.

**Advancing Citizen Engagement** (increasing opportunities for people to access the information and resources they need to thrive as engaged individuals, workers and lifelong learners).

### ***What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.***

Although in person outdoor programming numbers have been low, we do see a core group of families continuing to attend. Our takeaway craft bags draw families into the library on a weekly basis contributing to a rebound in children and youth circulation, which was up by nearly 12,000 in 2021. These two activities strengthen the connection we have with local families and children.

Regional online book clubs have enabled us to look at new ways to offer programming and consider keeping these options in the future. Although some people prefer face-to-face events, online programming for things like book clubs offer many conveniences especially in areas where winter driving conditions can be a barrier to attendance. The adult book club focused specifically on East and West Kootenay authors giving exposure to local writers.

*Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?*

### **Partnerships**

Our library received both Canada Summer Jobs and Young Canada Works grants fully funding our Summer Reading Club students.

Seventeen local businesses contributed prizes to children and youth participating in our Summer Reading Club.

Kootenay Library Federation libraries coordinate with each other to host monthly book clubs for adults and teens.

### **Project/Program Name**

Staff professional development – First Aid Training, BCLA Online Conference, Indigenous Awareness, Courageous Conversations.

### **Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.**

Staff had lots of opportunity in 2021 to develop new skills and build their knowledge base. Six staff updated their Occupational First Aid training at Selkirk College.

With the BCLA Conference online, all of our full-time staff were able to register and watch most of the sessions over the three-month period that recordings were available.

Three of our staff took a self-directed course on Indigenous Awareness training through the Indigenous Relations Academy. The lessons, led by Bob Joseph covered pre-contact plus our historical and current relationship with Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Library Directors in the Kootenay Library Federation took part in Courageous Conversation sessions facilitated by Cara Pryor. Sessions focused on learning to communicate through potentially contentious conversations.

### **How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?**

**Focus Area:** Organizational Vitality

**Goal:** We have the people, resources and expertise to sustain our success

**Strategy:** We support the development of our staff

**How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.**

**Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)

**Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)

*What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.*

All of the mentioned learning opportunities gave our staff varied knowledge and skills.

First-aid training contributes to the day-to-day health and safety of our staff and patrons and gives staff the confidence to act in an emergency.

The Indigenous Awareness training is a foundational course that helped our staff build awareness and understanding around Truth and Reconciliation. Staff found the lessons engaging and learned a lot about our history with Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Courageous Conversations gave Kootenay Library Directors an opportunity to work through current issues that each of us were facing within a safe space using skills taught by Cara over five sessions.

*Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?*

The Kootenay Library Federation organized and paid for the Indigenous Awareness training and Courageous Conversations.

### **Project/Program Name**

New furniture, shelving, worktables and chairs.

**Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.**

With a generous legacy from a library patron, the library purchased 15 feet of new shelf space accommodating 495 books in our adult fiction section.

The Friends of the Castlegar & District Public Library purchased two new comfortable reading chairs, six new worktables and twelve new chairs for our small meeting room and study area.

We also purchased a new “new books” unit, which displays all of our current items.

**How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?**

**Focus Area:** Physical Space and Collections

**Goal:** Our revitalized space and high-quality collections meet the diverse needs of our users.

**Strategy:** We balance plans for revitalizing our physical space with utilization of available resources and patron needs.

**How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.**

I don't think these purchases really support any of Libraries Branch strategic goals but the new furniture and shelving does fulfill our own library's strategic direction.

[What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.](#)

Refurbishment of our space is essential in continuing to build a welcoming place for our community. Over the past 5 years, we have been buying new furniture and shelving each year to replace well-worn items to increase the comfort of our patrons. This year new tables and chairs purchased for our small meeting room give the space a more professional atmosphere.

[Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role \(e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery\)?](#)

The Friends of the Castlegar & District Library hold two annual book sales to support special purchases for the library outside of our regular budget.

Funding for our new shelving came from a patron legacy. For privacy reasons I will not include the persons name.

### 3. Key Challenges

*The following topics have been identified as recurring themes in previous years' PLGRs. The intent of this section is to collect detailed information in a structured, consistent format.*

*Please select the most significant challenges that the library has faced in the past year that you wish to comment on. Leave any other listed topics blank.*

*Use the 'Other' row to include any ongoing or past challenges that are not included in this list. If you have more than one 'Other' item to add, please insert additional rows into the table.*

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2021. Please specify if any provincial funding was used, e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other non-PLB provincial grants (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	<p>Our library was in a holding pattern with Covid-19 in 2021. We had planned to offer a slate of in person programs in the fall but restrictions prevented us from doing so. We continued to offer online and outdoor programming with weekly take away kits. The take away kits are extremely popular and they continue to draw families, but outdoor programming attendance has been light. Staff have been reluctant to bring programs indoors because of masking, passports and a general fear of causing an exposure event.</p> <p>Enforcing safety protocols have been challenging for our staff at times when we experience pushback against the rules, specifically masking. These encounters leave us feeling rattled.</p>

Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	Our community experienced extremely hot conditions this summer with the heat dome. Our library offers a cool reprieve from the outdoors. We experienced a local fire (Merry Creek) this summer that was extinguished quickly. With extremely hot and dry conditions, we feared another fire sparking over the summer months. Dry, hot, smoky conditions seem to be the norm in the summer that adds a layer of stress to our staff and community.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	We increasingly try to balance library operations, programing and serving our patrons with the number of staff we can afford for the number of hours we are open. With world events, I fear the price increases in the future.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	Our library needs a modern refresh. Last year our front steps were repaired, and this year we are getting a new roof and HVAC system. We are seeing a lot of wear and tear inside our library in terms of carpet, paint and bathrooms. We have a large basement area that needs remodelling to make better use of the space and to make it more welcoming. We are in a city owned building.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	Our library does not have an elevator and our programming and meeting space is downstairs. Currently we only have a chair lift that has a maximum weight capacity. It is difficult for parents with strollers and seniors with mobility issues to get downstairs.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	Our library has seen an increase of vulnerable folks over the past two years. We have seen open drug use outside on library property and have cleaned up a lot of drug paraphernalia. Over the past few years, we have called the RCMP a number of times to help us deal with escalating unsafe situations.

#### 4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

*Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.*

Library Director Signature:

Kimberly Partanen. Date: March 16, 2022

Board Chair Signature:

Sarah Byers. Date: March 16, 2022